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GOULBURN
ON
CONFIRMATION.

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A
MANUAL OF CONFIRMATION,

COMPRISING

- I. A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE ORDINANCE.
II. THE ENGLISH ORDER OF CONFIRMATION, WITH SHORT
NOTES, CRITICAL AND DEVOTIONAL.
III. MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS ON PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIP-
TURE, IN CONNEXION WITH THE ORDINANCE:

WITH A

PASTORAL LETTER,

INSTRUCTING CATECHUMENS HOW TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THEIR

First Communion.

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D.

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S,

AND ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY.

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I.

A GENERAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION.

1. [Illegible text]

2. [Illegible text]

3. [Illegible text]

A GENERAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION.

§ I. *Its ground in Holy Scripture.* (1.) WE read (Acts ii.) that the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and that, as the result of this descent, they were endowed with a miraculous power of speaking with other tongues, v. 4. But it must be carefully observed that this miraculous endowment was but a small, and comparatively unimportant, effect of the Comforter's descent. That great event transformed them instantaneously from ignorant disciples, dull of apprehension, and timid in the hour of trial, into wise teachers, on whom the Scheme of Salvation had dawned in all its beauty and harmony, and into steadfast maintainers of the Truth, at the risk of all which the world holds most dear. For the proof of this assertion, compare Luke xviii. 34, and many parallel passages, where they manifest an absolute

incapacity to receive the doctrine of a Messiah glorified through suffering, with St. Peter's addresses, (Acts ii. and iii.) where he recognizes every stage of our Lord's career as a fulfilment of prophecy, and implies that His death, though brought about by the instrumentality of man, had been foreordained in the counsels of God (Acts iii. 18). Also compare the fact that upon our Lord's apprehension, "all the disciples forsook him and fled," with the resolute and determined attitude which they assume in the early part of the Acts, and specially the circumstance of St. Peter's denial with his answer to the Sanhedrim in iv. 19: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things, which we have seen and heard." Hence we conclude that in addition to the miraculous gifts then conferred upon them (and which no longer remain in the Church), a great moral and spiritual change passed upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.

(2.) But it was not designed that the Apostles alone should partake of the outpouring of the Spirit. All believers, of whatever rank or station, ("sons and daughters, young men and old men, servants and handmaidens," Acts ii. 17, 18,) were to be sharers of the mighty boon. The regular method of its transmission was to be through the laying on of the Apos-

ties' hands, after the administration of Baptism. In one remarkable instance, indeed, that of Cornelius, the gift was conferred even previously to Baptism (Acts x. 44—47). But this was an exception to the ordinary course of proceeding, the design of which was to warrant St. Peter in administering Baptism to one of Gentile descent, which else, as being under the influence of Jewish prejudices, he might have been backward to do. (It may also teach us generally that God, though He commonly works through Ordinances, is not tied to them.) The regular method of proceeding is fully indicated in the case of the Samaritans (Acts viii. 14—17). They hear the preaching of Philip the Deacon, and are converted by it, they receive Baptism from his hands, and then the higher Authorities of the Church are sent for to lay hands on them, that they may receive the Holy Ghost. The same plan is observed with the disciples at Ephesus (ch. xix. 5, 6). They first receive Christian Baptism (from other hands, it would appear, than St. Paul's), and then, with the laying on of his hands, "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." The miraculous effects being in these cases similar to those which followed on the day of Pentecost, we conclude that the ordinary moral and spiritual effects were also the same.

(3.) We must not omit to notice the celebrated passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (vi. 1, 2,) where reference is justly supposed to be made to the Ordinance of Confirmation, as it existed in the primitive Church. St. Paul is there urging Christian progress and growth in grace, a leaving of the rudiments of religion, and a going on unto perfection. He mentions rudimentary Graces, rudimentary Ordinances, and rudimentary Doctrines. The Ordinances are "Baptisms and Laying on of Hands." The passage has difficulties, which should make us cautious in explaining it; but it has been asked with great cogency, What can be this Imposition of Hands, which is spoken of as standing at the threshold of Christian Life, but that by which the Apostles were in the habit of transmitting the Holy Spirit? This is made the more probable by the immediately succeeding context, in which mention is made of "being once enlightened" (Baptism was called *φωτισμὸς*, *enlightening*), "and being made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*."

(4.) Briefly; we find that the laying on of hands after Baptism, united with prayer for the Holy Ghost, was accompanied with an increase of spiritual light and strength, and we see reason to think that this laying on of hands was the prerogative of the highest order in the Ministry.

The essentials then of Confirmation (as gathered from Scripture) are,

- (1) *Laying on of hands.*
- (2) *Prayer for the Holy Ghost.*

And probably (3) *Administration by a Bishop.*

From what has been said it will be evident that,

(a) We continue the outward sign in Confirmation, because there is reason to think that, while the miraculous gifts have ceased, the moral and spiritual effects remain. Thus in our retaining Confirmation, there is nothing inconsistent with our rejection of the anointing of the sick, prescribed by St. James (v. 14) and practised by the Apostles (Mark vi. 13). In this case the outward sign, being the symbol *merely* of a miraculous cure *which no longer exists*, has been rightly dropped.

(b) It is evident also that, so far as its Scriptural ground is concerned, Confirmation is altogether independent of the age of the recipient. It is not an ordinance for youth exclusively. The administration of it to persons fifteen or sixteen years old, belongs not to the *essence* of the Ordinance; but to the *form*, which a particular branch of the Church has given it.

(c) Lastly, it is evident that Baptism and Confirmation present to us two distinct ideas, which may not be confounded.

Baptism makes disciples (*μαθητεύσατε βαπτίζοντες*). It is an admission into the School of Christ. Disciples there were, before there was any Church or organized Society of believers; for Jesus, through His disciples, made and baptized more disciples than John (John iv. 1, 2). But these disciples, being as yet under the wing of their Master, and not being called upon to bear the brunt of that contradiction and opposition which He attracted to Himself, were yet *in statu pupillari*; they had not yet received the plenitude of Grace, Wisdom, and Power. This was a privilege reserved for them, when left alone to cope with the world, and to reduce it to the obedience of faith.

Again, Baptism is a grafting into the True Vine. Confirmation rather resembles the outpouring of precious dew and copious rain upon the vine branch, whereby it puts forth its leaves and fruits, and unfolds its latent powers.

Baptism is a passage from a state of heathen darkness to the light of Christian Privilege. Confirmation is a furnishing of the believer with arms, for the conflict with his spiritual antagonists.

All which considerations make it suitable and appropriate (though not essential) that Confirmation *should* be deferred to a period when the young heart *is just beginning* to be conscious of a struggle with

the desperate wickedness inherent in it, when its mental and moral powers are expanding, and the first trial of life, with all its temptations and difficulties, lies before it.

§ II. *Its* (1.) "It appears that in the primitive *History*. Church, Confirmation followed immediately upon Baptism, if the Bishop were present to administer it, and this was the case whether the Neophyte were an infant or an adult. The Bishop anointed him with an unguent of oil and balsam, in token of the Holy Spirit, and laid his hands upon him after the example of the Apostles."—(*Humphry's Historical and Explanatory Treatise on the Common Prayer.*)

In fact, Confirmation was regarded as the completion of Baptism, and so not to be divorced from it in point of time, unless circumstances imperatively demanded such a severance. Nor, though it is doubtless more judicious to defer it, is there any thing in the administration of it to an infant, which need surprise or shock us. That infants are capable of receiving Divine Grace we admit by the fact of our baptizing them; and it is to be remembered that our Lord laid His hands on little children, and blessed them,—a precedent which of itself may surely warrant the practice.

(2.) *The divorce of Confirmation from Baptism*

seems to have originated in the fact that the Bishop was often absent, when Baptism was administered. From this absence flowed two alternatives, one of which, it seems, was adopted by the Eastern, the other by the Western, branch of the Church.

Either the Presbyter (or Priest) might be authorized to administer Confirmation as well as Baptism,—in which case the two rites would still remain associated,—or the Baptized must wait for Confirmation, till the Bishop came to their district. The former course is to this day adopted by the Eastern Church, where Confirmation is administered by the Presbyter immediately after Baptism. It would appear, however, that the Imposition of hands has been dropped, and that the Ordinance of Confirmation in the East consists of prayer for the Holy Ghost, accompanied with the application of oil (see Palmer's *Origines*, vol. ii. p. 201). Bingham tells us, that, “as to the Imposition of hands in Confirmation, we find *that* more universally and strictly reserved to the Office of Bishops, than the use of the unction was” (*Antiquities*, Book xii. chap. 2). Whence perhaps the Presbyter was not considered at liberty to perform it without the special commission of the Bishop. The Western Church has adopted the other, and probably the sounder, alternative of deferring Confirmation, until the Bishop can administer it.

§ III. *The form* (1.) It being the excellent design of our Reformers to purify the rites of the Church from all unauthorized adjuncts, which had grown up like parasitical plants around them, and to reduce Ceremonial to its primitive chastity and simplicity, they discarded the ointment in Confirmation, the use of which, although it dates from the end of the second, or beginning of the third, century, has no sanction in the practice of the Apostles. In the first Protestant Book of Common Prayer, however, we find a trace of the ointment, which had been used before the Reformation, in the following prayer, "Confirm and strengthen them with the inward *unction* of thy Holy Ghost mercifully unto everlasting life." In the second book of Edward VI., published three years afterwards, this allusion is removed, and the present sentence of administration, "Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace," makes its appearance for the first time.

(2.) As to the age at which Confirmation should be ministered, it is most judiciously ordered to be, when children have come to years of discretion. The advantage of having some definite period of life, when men may make a solemn compact in their own persons with God and Christ, and ratify that con-

tract by an act of unusual solemnity, cannot be overrated. Many Christians, when the fervour of their first religious feelings was upon them, have attempted by some private transaction between themselves and God (such as a written bond or agreement), to create for themselves a sort of security against future backslidings. The legitimate satisfaction of the instinct, which has prompted them so to act, is to be found in Confirmation. The person to be Confirmed comes before the assembled Church, before its chief pastor, and above all before His mysterious Presence, who, where two or three are gathered together in His Name, is in the midst of them. He there lays the whole of his heart at the Apostles' feet (woe be to him, if, like a second Ananias, he keeps back part of it by some mental reservation for sin and the world)—he subscribes with his hand to the Lord, makes public choice of His service, and enlists under His banner once for all, to follow it through evil report and good report, even to his life's end. What act can be more solemn, more obligatory, in the retrospect, and what more appropriate age can be selected for making this profession, than when, on the one hand, the character is yet plastic and has not finally crystallized, and, on *the* other, the strength of evil passions and the *allurements of worldly vanity* are beginning to be felt,

and the youth is becoming conscious of those mighty powers within and without him, which are drawing him with deep and strong current in a direction away from God? He stands upon life's threshold, and it is well surely that before crossing it he should put himself under the auspices of his Lord, should consciously seek, and consciously receive, the blessing and the strength, which alone can prosper his voyage over the waves of a troublesome world.

§ IV. *Why not a Sacrament?* THE laying on of hands being an outward visible sign, which, to those who receive it in a right frame of mind, is accompanied by an inward Spiritual Grace, it is obvious to ask, what it is that distinguishes this Rite from a Sacrament?

The answer is, that Christ Himself did not ordain it—it was an institution of His Apostles.

Nor let this difference be thought trifling. We justly ascribe to the words and acts of the Incarnate God a higher dignity than to those even of inspired and infallible men. It is in accordance with this principle, that our Church recognizes in the Gospels (as containing the words of Christ Himself) a higher dignity than in the Epistles,—the congregation being instructed to stand up, while the Gospel is read.

An interesting reason is given by Aquinas for

Christ's not having instituted Confirmation Himself. "Because the Holy Ghost, which is herein to be communicated, was not given till after Christ's Ascension," John vii. 39. *Comber on the Confirmation Office.*

§ V. *The Name.* DOWN to the time of the Reformation, the Rite seems to have been called Chrism, a name which is retained by the Greek Church to this day. When the anointing was dropped, the name of course lost its applicability.

Another ancient name for the Rite is *σφραγίς*, *The Seal*. The reference is to St. Paul's words in Eph. i. 13. "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Baptism is the ordinance in which we confess our faith, and are placed under the Spirit's guidance. In Confirmation we are *sealed* by the Spirit, declared to be Christ's own people, and authenticated as His, by the descent upon us of power from on high.

The name of *χειροθεσία* (*Imposition of hands*), which we have retained in the title of our Office, is also ancient.

The rite has the name of Confirmation, first, because in it we renew or confirm our Baptismal Vow; secondly, because, by means of it, we are ourselves confirmed in grace.

II.

THE ENGLISH
ORDER OF CONFIRMATION,

With Short Notes,

DEVOTIONAL AND CRITICAL.



THE BAPTISMAL VOW¹.

I RENOUNCE² the devil³ and all⁴ his works, the pomps and vanity⁵ of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts⁶ of the flesh.

Secondly, I believe all the Articles⁷ of the Christian Faith.

And thirdly, I will⁸ keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk⁹ in the same all the days¹⁰ of my life.

¹ All vows are promises, but all promises are not vows. A vow is a solemn promise made to God.

² To renounce means to declare antagonism or opposition to. The word *renounce* was substituted for *forsake* at the time the Catechism received its addition from Dean Overall in 1604, after the Hampton Court Conference. To *forsake* means to quit or give up. Now we do not *actually* forsake the devil, world, and flesh, at Confirmation, but *declare our hostility* to them.

³ The three great powers which draw man away from God are evil angels (the devil), evil men (the world), evil self (the flesh). The first is the foe farthest off, the last the nearest and most intimate. Remember that in your baptismal vow you imply a firm belief in the power and influence of evil spirits, however little weight a sceptical age may attach to that doctrine.

⁴ All sins are works of the devil, but specially,

1. Falsehood, he having uttered the first falsehood, John viii. 44.
2. Enticing others into sin, he being called the tempter, Matt. iv. 3.
3. Calumny, the word *devil* (διάβολος) meaning false accuser. See his false accusations of Job, ch. i. and ii.
4. Murder, he having brought death into the world, John viii. 44.
5. Pride, it being uniformly supposed that by pride the angels fell, Jude v. 6.
6. And, generally, sins with something of a splendid and attractive character in them, such as excuses them in the world's eye, it being the property of Satan to transform himself into an angel of light. 2 Cor. xi. 14.

⁵ By pomps is meant vain outward display (the original word means a procession) such as Hezekiah made of his riches, (Isaiah xxxix. 2—4,) Herod of his dress and eloquence, (Acts xii. 21,) David of the number of his people, (2 Sam. xxiv. 2, &c. &c.) Vanity comprises all forms of *petty* pride, such as pride of dress, good looks, or cleverness.

⁶ By the sinful lusts of the flesh are meant all the corrupt tendencies of our nature. These are tendencies to

- (1) Impurity (Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness).
- (2) Superstition (Idolatry, Witchcraft).
- (3) Sins of Temper (Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife).
- (4) Party Spirit (Seditions, Heresies).
- (5) Uncharitableness (Envyings, Murders).
- (6) Excess (Drunkenness, Revellings).

And such like.

Class (1) contains sins committed *with* one's neighbour.

Class (2)against God.

Classes (3) (4) (5)*against* one's neighbour.

Class (6)against oneself.

So, in the classification of the fruits of the Spirit.

Love is a grace exercised mutually between neighbours.

Joy and Peace are graces exercised towards God.
Long-Suffering, Gentleness,
Goodness, Faith, and Meekness } .. towards our neighbour.
Temperance towards oneself.

We see from the above how great a mistake is usually made in connecting with the Flesh *only* Sins of Uncleanness.

Read the whole passage, Gal. v. 19—24.

⁷ These articles are summed up in the Creeds.

To believe the things recorded of our Lord, *as mere events of History*, will avail us nothing. The devils have this faith and tremble. James ii. 19. The devils confessed our Lord to be the Son of God, and dreaded and deprecated the exercise of His power. Mark v. 7. Luke viii. 28.

Every event mentioned in the Creed, is not only an event, but a Doctrine; that is, it is a fact that has a significance as regards ourselves. If Christ died, it was to make expiation for *our* sins; if He descended into hell, it was as *our* great High Priest, treading before us the bed of the Dark River; if He rose, it was that God might signify His acceptance of Christ's Work in *our* behalf; if He ascended, it was to plead *our* cause with the Father. The facts of the Creed then must be believed as Doctrines in their reference to ourselves. And if believed thus, they will operate upon the heart and character, engendering love of Christ and trust in Him, and consequently obedience to Him. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John xvi. 15.

⁸ God's Will is one thing; it prescribes Love—supreme love to God—love to our neighbour as to ourself.

His Commandments are different forms into which His Will throws itself, at the various points where it might be violated. The will is like a paling thrown round an enclosure; the commandments are the different points at which the enclosure might be broken through.

Hence St. James says (ch. ii. 10), "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;" i. e. He has put himself outside the whole paling, at whatever point he has stepped out of it.

This will prescribe either the claims of God, or those of man.

I. The claims which God has upon His rational creatures are :

1. That they shall worship Him *exclusively* ^a (1st com.);
2. That they shall worship Him *spiritually* ^b (2nd com.);
3. That they shall worship Him *continually*, by bearing in mind His presence ^c (3rd com.);
4. That they shall devote a certain portion of time to direct acts of worship ^d (4th com.).

II. The claims which man has upon us are :

1. That we pay a due regard to his rank—the position which he occupies in regard to us in society (5th com.);
2. A due regard to his life and person (6th com.);
3. To his affections ^e (7th com.);
4. To his property (8th com.);
5. To his reputation (9th com.);
6. A restraint upon all thoughts which would lead us to injure him in any of these respects (10th com.).

^a *To keep* is simply *to observe, be heedful of.*

To walk in implies rather the fulfilment of positive duty, than the negative abstinence from breaking the commandments.

¹⁰ "All the *days* of my life." The word *days* intimates that the service is to be rendered punctually *day by day*, not in a general sense diffused over the whole life.

^a To the exclusion of Pleasure, Money, Distinction, and all other objects of human pursuit.

^b Not under the Form of an Image. Not with mere lip-service, &c.

^c This would be an effectual check upon speaking lightly of Him.

^d Daily prayer (as well as Sunday Worship) is prescribed by the principle of this Commandment.

^e Chastity is better referred to the third Commandment, which prescribes that we shall hallow God's Name, (i. e. all things connected with Him,) and therefore our Bodies, which are Temples of the Holy Ghost.

ORDER OF CONFIRMATION.

¶ *Upon the day appointed, all that are to be then confirmed, being placed, and standing in order, before the Bishop; he (or some other Minister appointed by him) shall read this Preface¹ following.*

To the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, That none hereafter shall be Confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contained: which order is very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent², openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the

same; and also promise, that by the grace³ of God they will evermore endeavour themselves⁴ faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

Do ye here, in the presence of God⁵, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?

¶ *And every one shall audibly⁶ answer,*
I do.

The Bishop.

OUR help is in the Name⁷ of the Lord;

Answer. Who hath made heaven and earth.

Bishop. Blessed⁸ be the Name of the Lord;

Answer. Henceforth, world without end.

Bishop. Lord⁹, hear our prayers.

Answer. And let our cry come unto thee.

The Bishop. Let us pray¹⁰.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed

to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins¹¹; Strengthen¹² them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold¹³ gifts of grace; the spirit of¹⁴ wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. *Amen.*

¶ *Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his¹⁵ hand upon the head of¹⁶ every one severally, saying,*

DEFEND, O Lord, this thy Child [or *this thy Servant¹⁷*] with thy heavenly grace¹⁸, that *he* may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy holy Spirit more and¹⁹ more, until *he* come unto thy everlasting²⁰ kingdom. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*
The Lord²¹ be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

¶ *And (all kneeling down) the Bishop shall add,*
Let us pray.

OUR Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy

Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen²².

And this Collect²³.

ALMIGHTY²⁴ and everliving God, who makest us both to will²⁵ and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto thy Divine Majesty; We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy Apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify²⁶ them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them. Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be²⁷ over them; let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth²⁸ and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

O ALMIGHTY Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that,

through thy most mighty protection both here and ever, we may be preserved in²⁹ body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Bishop shall bless³⁰ them, saying thus,*

THE Blessing³¹ of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

¶ *And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready³² and desirous to be confirmed.*

NOTES.

¹ Part of this Preface appeared in King Edward's two Prayer Books in the form of a Rubric.

It is well, before we enter on any solemn office of religion, to have the design of the office brought before our minds, that we may enter into it the more intelligently. Hence, the introduction of this Preface in the Confirmation Service, as also the opening of the daily Morning and Evening Prayer with an address setting forth the objects of our assembling together, is much to be commended.

² “*Mouth and Consent.*”

The first external—the second expressive of inward resolve—*Mouth* corresponds to *ratify*—*Consent* to *confirm*.—The figure is that, which Bengel in the Appendix to his Gnomon calls direct Chiasm, that is, when two pairs of words being employed, the first corresponds to the third, and the second to the fourth.—(See his explanation of the figure.)

³ “*By the Grace of God.*”

It is well that we are reminded thus early, of the necessity of forming our resolutions in God's strength.

4 “ *Endeavour themselves.*”

To endeavour oneself was in old English a reflexive verb. Thus we have, “ Grant that we may daily *endeavour ourselves* to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life.” (Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter.) And in the Ordination Service of Deacons, “ I will *endeavour myself*, the Lord being my helper.”

5 “ *In the presence of God and of this Congregation.*”

The people are assembled in Christ’s Name, and therefore He, the God-man, according to His promise, is in the midst of them. How should this solemnize the heart of every candidate ! he is coming to the feet of the Captain of our salvation, to swear his allegiance.

6 “ *Audibly.*”

So as to be heard. We must not only believe in Christ with the heart, but confess Him with the mouth. Rom. x. 9, 10.

7 “ *Our help is in the Name of the Lord.*”

It is fit that the persons to be Confirmed should be reminded, at the very opening of the Service, where their true strength lies. “ He that trusteth in his own heart ” (i. e. in his own strength of will and resolution) to fulfil such an engagement as the Baptismal Vow, would indeed be “ a fool.”

Nay, but trust in His help, who hath stretched out the heavens like a curtain, and who hath laid the foundations of the earth.

The eternal power of God, on which we are here en-

couraged to lean, is manifested in the works of creation. Rom. i. 20.

⁸ “ *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*”

The moment the mind really turns to God in renunciation of self-dependence, and in true reliance on His aid, help is granted, and we are enabled to say, “Blessed be the Name of the Lord,” and to swell that chorus of praise, which angels and saints are singing, and which shall be prolonged, until its echoes die away in the Hallelujahs of eternity.

⁹ “ *Lord, hear our prayers.*”

What a *fervent* spirit of prayer do these words denote ! Come to the ordinance in a spirit of earnest prayer, determined to overrule every obstacle which lies between you and CHRIST, and really to reach His ear—and you shall not fail of the blessing.

¹⁰ “ *Let us pray.*”

Oremus. Let us proceed to the Orison. This is a form used in passing from the alternate responsive supplications of the minister and people (*Preces*) to a prayer said by the priest alone (*Oratio*), the people responding only *Amen*. It also serves to call for close attention to what follows, and thus in some measure answers to the bell among the Papists, which is rung at the more solemn parts of the mass.

¹¹ “ *Sins.*”

The plural shows that *actual* sins are referred to, and not the remission of original sin in Baptism.

Of course, the assertion that God *has* forgiven the candidates all their sins, proceeds upon the hypothesis (which runs through the whole Prayer Book) that the ordinance is approached in repentance and faith.

¹² “*Strengthen them.*”

Palmer says of this prayer—

“In every ritual now extant, we find a similar form upon this occasion to that of the English, which has been used by our Church for above 1200 years.”

¹³ “*Thy manifold gifts of grace.*”

Septiformem Spiritum.

¹⁴ “*The Spirit of Wisdom,*” &c.

Some attempt is made to discriminate these various operations of the Holy Spirit in the Meditations, p. 57, &c.

Comber’s method of distinguishing them is here given, which is simpler, and probably truer and better.

“We must not be too curious in the particulars, since many of the words seem synonymous, yet we may thus distinguish these seven gifts :

1. “The spirit of being wise in spiritual things.”
2. “The spirit of apprehending what we are taught.”
3. “The spirit of prudent managing all our actions.”
4. “The spirit of power to execute all our religious purposes.”
5. “The spirit of discerning between good and evil.”
6. “The spirit of devotion in God’s service.”
7. “The spirit of reverence, to be expressed towards God in our whole conversation.”

“ These are the blessed gifts for which the bishop prays, that we may be wise and apprehensive, prudent and courageous, discreet in our choice, devout in our duties, and pious in our lives ; and if these can be obtained, we may be assured all graces will spring from these roots, charity and the love of God, humility and watchfulness, faith and holiness, meekness and patience, temperance and chastity, and what not ?”

¹⁵ “ *Lay his hand upon the head.*”

“ The imposition of hands is one of the most ancient ceremonies in the world, observed by Jacob in the giving of his blessing (Gen. xlviii. 14), and by his example ever after practised among the Jews in benedictions, in conferring of all holy offices (Numb. xxvii. 18), and to many other purposes in their religion ; whereupon, our Lord Jesus used it also when He blessed little children (Matt. xix. 13), as well as when He healed the sick (Matt. viii. 15) ; and the Apostles adopted it to be the rite for communicating the Spirit in confirmation (Acts viii. 17) : which was so regularly observed that it gave name to the whole office, which is called *laying on of hands* (Heb. vi. 2), as we noted before ; and not only St. Augustine, but most of the Latin writers call it usually *imposition of hands* ; nor was confirmation ever ministered without laying on of hands. And as upon Moses laying his hands upon the seventy elders, God put His spirit upon them (Numb. xi. 17), so we hope He will impart it to us, when the bishop lays his hand upon us (see Numb. vi. 27) ; and therefore we kneel most humbly that we may receive it. It was anciently the manner for the bishop to lay both his hands across on the head of the confirmed, not only

in imitation of Jacob (Gen. xlviii.), but with allusion to the death of Christ, in whom we believe, and from whom we receive the Holy Ghost."

¹⁶ " *Every one severally.*"

"The imposition of hands does not seem, in early times, to have been given to every distinct individual in the Roman Church. The bishop lifted up his hands over all the candidates at the same time, and blessed them."—*Palmer's Origines*, vol. ii. p. 200.

¹⁷ " *Or this thy Servant.*"

The introduction of this clause seems to show that our Confirmation Office was not designed *exclusively* for young people.

¹⁸ " *With thy heavenly grace.*"

These words show that the blessing supplicated is spiritual—has exclusive reference to the soul. If external protection were supplicated, it would be, "Defend *with thy Providence.*"

¹⁹ " *Daily increase more and more.*"

The notion of daily increase, is simply that something may be added daily. Of daily increase *more and more*, that the increment of to-day may be larger than that of yesterday.

²⁰ " *Everlasting kingdom.*"

The child has come already to God's kingdom of grace, that is, the Church—to that kingdom, which was at hand

when John the Baptist preached (Matt. iii. 2). What is needed is, that by grace he should be brought to the kingdom of *glory*, which is the *everlasting* kingdom.

²¹ “*The Lord be with you.*”

The mutual salutation of the bishop (or priest) and people, is derived from a Jewish form of ordinary salutation, slightly altered. Boaz says to his reapers, “The Lord be with you ;” to which they reply, “The Lord bless thee.” When the spiritual dispensation of Christianity was established, and this form grafted into the service of the Church, more of a spiritual character was thrown into the response, by a slight change, which finds its warrant in St. Paul’s benediction (2 Tim. iv. 22), “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.” The custom of using this mutual salutation in the Church service is said to be of Apostolical institution. We may remark how, among the Jews, all the courteous phrases of daily life had originally a religious significance. Christianity mints these phrases afresh, and employs them in Divine Worship. Thus our Lord, in bidding farewell to His Apostles, used the ordinary valedictory formula “Peace I leave with you;” yet He intimated that this formula in His mouth was invested with a new and higher significance, by adding, “*My* peace I give unto you.”

In the languages of Christian nations, most forms of salutation and valediction have originally a religious reference ; thus Adieu, Addio, Good bye (God be with you), &c. &c.

How completely has the original impression been worn off by constant familiar usage !

22 “ *Amen.* ”

From the circumstance of the Amen being printed in the ordinary (and not in italic) type, it would appear that the bishop is meant to add the Amen himself. See the Lord's Prayer, as it stands at the beginning of the Communion Service.

This part of the office partaking of the nature of prayer and not of praise, the Lord's Prayer has no doxology annexed to it.

23 “ *Collect.* ”

The word Collect (as applied to certain prayers, and not to others) is variously accounted for.

(1) It is said that the priest in a Collect collected in one *Oratio* the alternate supplications (*preces*) hitherto made by himself and the people jointly.

(2) From their use in *the congregation*, which in the Latin was termed *Collecta*, in Greek *συναξίς*.

(3) Because the Collects are general and comprehensive prayers, not designed for some specific purpose, for individuals or classes of individuals, or for special circumstances; but for the whole Church in its normal condition.

(See a full note on the subject in Greswell on the Burial Service, p. 197, vol. ii.)

The fact that this prayer is entitled a Collect seems to conflict with the last explanation, as it has *special reference to the newly-confirmed*.

The explanation of the title, as it stands at the head of the last Collect in the Burial Service, is no doubt that suggested

by Shepherd, vol. ii. p. 441,—“In Edward’s first book, this prayer was the collect used at the Communion, which was then celebrated at funerals.”

(4) Because many of the Collects for Sundays and Holy days are collected out of the Epistle and Gospel.

“ *“ Almighty and everliving God.”*

Remark that one and the same invocation is common to the two principal prayers in this Office.

In an ordinance (generally) connected with youth, there may be a propriety in addressing God as the ever-living One, who on the one hand is the God of their fathers, and on the other can watch over them to the end of their pilgrimage.

“ And even to your old age I am he ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isaiah xlvi. 4.)

” *“ To will and to do.”*

To will what is good, and do what is acceptable to God’s majesty. Direct chiasm. [See above, Note 2.]

All things intrinsically good are acceptable to God ; but goodness and acceptability to Him are not the same ideas.

We will by God’s preventing } grace.
We do by His co-operating }

Compare Article x. ; “ We have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.”

26 “ *To certify them of thy favour,*” &c.

Christ showed His favour to little children (Matt. xix. 15), by laying His hands on them, and expressed His love to St. John by the same sign (Rev. i. 17). *Comber*. The outward sign in Confirmation, like the elements in the Sacraments, and like the rainbow in the Noachic covenant, is designed to be a help to faith in God’s love.

27 “ *Ever be over them.*”

Ever; that is, when my hand is removed, and myself withdrawn.

The bishop sues here for four blessings :

1. A blessing affecting the circumstances and outward state of the persons confirmed. Let thy fatherly, &c.
2. A blessing affecting their hearts and inmost souls,—the spring of their character. Let thy Holy Spirit, &c.
3. A blessing affecting their minds. Lead them in the knowledge, &c.
4. A blessing affecting their wills. Lead them in the obedience, &c. Again he intimates here,
 1. The protection under which they must enter on life.
 2. The influence which must guide them.
 3. The path in which they must walk.
 4. The end to which they must look.

How exceedingly appropriate is it that, as the prayer travels on to this great consummation, “ the obtaining of life everlasting;” it should begin with the earliest work of grace upon the heart, the turning of the will. This first movement of the will is like the springing up, in the heart of a

desert, of a rill of living water. At first it is but a narrow stream,

“ Streaking the heath-clad hill
With a bright emerald thread ;”

but, as it flows on, it enlarges its borders, and fertilizes the country on its brink, and with strong and broad current, seeks its issue in the ocean. Such is the course of grace, from its first preventing movement in the heart, to its ultimate outlet in glory.

28 “ *Liveth and reigneth.*”

This close of the Collect, and the Versicle, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*, are the only parts of the Confirmation Service, which seem to partake of the tone of praise and adoration.

29 “ *May be preserved in body and soul.*”

This Collect, taken from the end of the Communion Service, was added to the Confirmation Office at the revisal in 1661.

Cyril says, “The sacred rite of Confirmation is the spiritual *phylactery of the body*, and the conservator of the soul.”

The last clause of this Collect is thus neatly expressed in the original, which has been used in the English Church from the 6th century to the present time :

“ ut, hic et in æternum te auxiliante, sani et
salvi esse mereamur.”

In the former part of the Collect, *direct* (dirigere) will apply to *hearts*; *govern* (regere) to *bodies*; *sanctify* (sanctificare) to both. A species of chiasm. [See Note 2.]

We *direct* that which has intelligence ;

We *govern* our limbs and animal nature.

Does any one object to the notion that the body may be *sanctified*, as well as the soul? Refer for the warrant of this notion to ; “The very God of peace *sanctify* you *wholly* ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and *body* may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thess. v. 23. Nothing which is not sanctified can have a share in the Resurrection, and therefore, as our bodies are to rise, they must be sanctified—instrumentally, by ourselves “keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection,”—but by the Holy Spirit as the originating cause, prompting and blessing this self-control, and ultimately raising up the body from corruption in the grave. Thus, at the close of this sublime Service, the eternal union of the believer’s body and soul in incorruption, is brought into view.

Had our Reformers maintained the triple division of human nature found in 1 Thess. v., the word

direct would have applied well to *spirit* ;

sanctify to *soul* ;

govern to *body* ;

but the distinction would have been too subtle to be generally apprehended.

Observe the practical implication in this Collect, that if we desire God’s protection, it is only to be had by walking “in the ways of his laws, and in the works of his commandments.”

³⁰ “ *Bless them.* ”

A blessing is an intercessory prayer, offered by one who

has authority over us, either in virtue of, 1, his office; 2, his age; 3, his relationship or position in the social system.

²¹ “ *The blessing,*” &c.

This is the latter half of the Benediction at the close of the Communion. The former part, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,” is omitted. The peace of God is the blessing annexed to the duty of making known our requests to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. (See Phil. iv. 6, 7.) The Communion Office is regarded as the Liturgy, or the Church’s great Form of Prayer, and as such the blessing covenanted to Prayer is invoked on the persons joining in it.

Here the idea of the ordinance is simple Benediction.

Observe also that *upon you* is substituted for *among you*. *Among you* implies a gathering of persons in Christ’s name, such as is essential to the Communion.

Upon you rather brings out the idea of the blessing resting on each individual head.

²² “ *Ready and desirous.*”

“The words *ready and desirous* were added at the last Review, in compliance with the request of the Presbyterian Divines, that Confirmation might not be made so necessary to the Holy Communion, as that none should be admitted to it unless they had been confirmed.” *Shepherd*.

We find, however, a similar clause introduced into the Rubric of the Manuals of Sarum and York.

“ Nullus debet admitti ad Sacramentum Corporis et Sanguinis J. C. extra mortis articulum, nisi fuerit confirmatus, vel a receptione Sacramenti Confirmationis fuerit rationabiliter impeditus.”

It is surely of importance to recognize the principle that, where people are precluded from any ordinance by unavoidable necessity, a gracious God, who is altogether independent of ordinances, will supply the lack of it.

III.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

On Passages of Holy Scripture,

**IN CONNEXION WITH THE ORDINANCE OF
CONFIRMATION.**

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

On Passages of Holy Scripture,

IN CONNEXION WITH THE ORDINANCE OF
CONFIRMATION.

I.—The Ordinance.

I.

ACTS viii. 14—17. Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

LORD, I pray for myself, and for all who shall be confirmed with me, that we, through the laying on of hands, may receive the Holy Ghost. I believe that the sign, which thine Apostles have ordained, is not a bare ceremony, but an effectual means of

grace, to such as do receive it with an earnest and sincere purpose of turning to Thee. Yet is this Ordinance (like others) a mere channel of grace, which, except Thou replenish it out of thy fulness, must prove dry and empty. Therefore did the Apostles, and therefore doth the Bishop (in imitation of the Apostles) pray before administering it, acknowledging thereby that themselves are but instruments, and that all the virtue is from Thee. But the prayer even of pastors and parents will not avail us aught, except we pray for ourselves. Therefore, Lord, as Thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; so give now thy Spirit unto us that ask; let us that seek, find; open the gate unto us that knock, that we may receive in this Ordinance thy heavenly Benediction, and may come to the eternal Kingdom which Thou hast promised by Christ our Lord.

II.

ACTS ix. 12, 17, 18. *Behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. . . . And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother*

Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales : and he received sight forthwith.

I MUST pray in prospect of this Ordinance, if I desire the blessing which it was designed to convey. I cannot profit by it, except I enter upon it in a spirit of prayer and serious meditation. Lord, dispose me to enter into my closet, and shut the door, and pray unto Thee, my Father, who seest in secret. I am blind and ignorant. May spiritual sight be given me by means of this Ordinance. There is a film upon the natural mind, wherewith the god of this world hath blinded it, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine in upon it. Lord, open mine eyes to the great evil of sin, and to thy great love as manifested in Christ.

III.

GEN. xlviii. 8—16. *And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. (Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not*

see.) And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

As Joseph presented his sons to Jacob, so my parents, in this Ordinance, present me to the Bishop, and through him to Christ. My father commits me to the God of my fathers, that I may receive His Benediction, and go forth in His Name. If my parents are absent in body, they are present

in spirit, and I will think of them as offering me upon the Altar of God, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto the Most High. And I will think of God under that touching and tender title as "the God before whom my fathers did walk"—who ministered to them support in trial, grace in temptation, and comfort in trouble. May I find grace to walk after their example, setting God always before me, and being continually mindful of His presence.

IV.

PSALM xxvii. 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will gather me (take me up).*

THESE words have reference to the office of the three tribes who came in the rear of Israel's march through the wilderness, and whose duty it was to gather up the sick and feeble,—those who had been dropped on the burning sand.

An hour must come, when my father and my mother will forsake me, will go on before me into the unseen world, and leave me to battle single-handed with Life. May God prove Himself to me a Father of the fatherless, when that hour comes!

But, before that time arrives, growing years will

bring with them many opportunities, when I must act for myself and bear my own burden.

On this solemn occasion I must come out and separate myself from under the shadow of my parents, and profess for myself my choice of Christ's Service. Lord, fold me under the wing of thy Providence; gather me into the bosom of thy Love; and thus carry me through the wilderness of this world.

V.

I SAM. iii. 10. *And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.*

God called me when an infant by the waters of Baptism, over which my Christian Name was first pronounced. Many a time and oft has He called me by His Holy Spirit moving in my conscience, since I have been able to apprehend and respond to the call. How have I drowned His still small voice, by plunging into the din of worldly vanities and excitements. And now He calls me more solemnly than ever in this Ordinance of Confirmation. I will turn to Him with a listening ear and an obedient heart, saying, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

He calls me by *name*. He knows my past history,

the secret of my character, the recesses of my heart. My faults are not hid from Him. "Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts long before."

If I follow His footsteps through my pilgrimage, I shall enjoy the blessed privilege of having an Almighty and Sympathizing Friend, before whom I may unburden my heart with the fullest assurance of being understood.

Grant, O Lord, that I may forthwith give up myself obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments. May I make haste and prolong not the time to keep thy law.

VI.

ST. LUKE x. 5, 6. *And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.*

EVEN the Benediction of the Apostles had no salutary effect upon those, in whom was found no rudiment of a right mind. It abode only upon those houses wherein a son of peace dwelt. Let me not think that Confirmation and the Blessing of the Bishop will act as a spell, independently of the state of mind in which I receive it.

The Dove of Divine Peace issues forth from all the Ordinances of the Church, as the literal dove issued from the Ark of Noah ; but peace lights not except upon a prepared heart, even as the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot in the waste of waters. Lord, prepare my heart to receive the blessing.

VII.

EPH. i. 13. *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

To hear the word of truth is the first stage in the process of human salvation. Have I heard it with seriousness and attention? Have I listened intelligently to Christian instruction? And diligently compared what I have heard with the sure words of Holy Scripture?

To trust in CHRIST is the second stage, and this is that to which the hearing of the word of truth should lead. Am I trusting to Christ for pardon, grace, and strength? looking to Him for happiness?

But there is a yet further stage, to which I am called in the Ordinance of Confirmation; for the Disciples, after they had become believers, had need

to have their blindness enlightened, and their weakness confirmed, by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon them at Pentecost. This stamped them as God's own—the visible mark of holiness thus impressed upon them authenticated them to the world as his.

Lord, make me henceforth decided in my Christian profession. Seal me with thy Spirit in the rite of Confirmation ; impress upon my heart thine Image, and give me, even here below, the earnest and foretaste of spiritual joys.

II.—The Qualifications.

I.

2 KINGS ix. 32. *Who is on my side? Who?*

“THE Ark, and Israel and Judah ” (The Church of God) “ abide in tents ” (in the tabernacle of a sinful mortal body) “ and my lord Joab and the servants of my Lord ” (Christ and his true people) “ are encamped in the open field ” (of the world),—waging a spiritual war against those three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Captain of our Salvation cries to us, as we enter upon life, *Who is on my side? Who?*

Lord, I would be on thy side. I would declare for Thee this day, I would take my oath of allegiance to Thee as my Captain, I would enlist under thy banner of the cross. Oh! let me never desert it, but make me thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.

II.

ACTS v. 1—11. *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And*

she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

I PROFESS, in Confirmation, to be giving my whole heart to God. How awful to make such a profession, if I am reserving part of it for self and the world! if there is a single wrong habit or practice, which I desire to retain! or a single known duty, which I cannot resolve in God's strength to fulfil! What is this but keeping back part of the price, and bringing a certain part, and laying it at the feet of the Church's Rulers? Lord, deliver me from the hypocrisy of Ananias. Make my devotion unreserved and entire; help me to sacrifice every cherished lust upon thine Altar, and to put my whole body, soul, and spirit, at Thy disposal.

III.

ISAIAH xliv. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's;*

and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

WITH trembling hand, O Lord, I subscribe my name among the number of thy followers. Pour out upon me that Spirit, which alone can make me do this in truth and heart's uprightness. And may my name be never blotted out of thy Book, by my faithlessness and disobedience. Make me to be numbered among thy saints in glory everlasting.

IV.

1 KINGS xviii. 21. *How long halt ye between two opinions ?*

REV. iii. 16. *So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

THE service of God is inconsistent with the service of the world. The giving of half a heart is an insult to God, since it acknowledges his claim, without satisfying it. Lord, deliver me from lukewarmness and vacillation, and make me constant and resolute in thy service. I must beware how I approach this ordinance in a spirit of lukewarmness ; for that would ensure my rejection.

It must be my aim not merely to live as creditably as those around me, not merely to maintain a fair exterior and a freedom from gross sin, but to throw my heart and soul into Christ's service. Lord, deliver me from that subtle spirit of self-complacency and self-satisfaction, which is the source of lukewarmness. Make me to know and feel that I need thy wealth to enrich me, thy light to illuminate me, communion with Thee to make me happy, the raiment of thy righteousness to cover me. Make me to forget the things which are behind, and to reach forth to those which are before, and to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

III.—The Gift.

THE GIFT WHICH IS PRAYED FOR IN CONFIRMATION, AND WHICH MAY BE EXPECTED FROM IT, WHEN DULY ADMINISTERED AND DULY RECEIVED, is described as

The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding ;
The Spirit of Counsel and Ghostly Strength ;
The Spirit of Knowledge and true Godliness ;
And the Spirit of Holy Fear.

1. *Wisdom.* (ΣΟΦΙΑ.) The discernment, communicated by the Spirit, of the deep things of God. He who has this discernment sees a significance in those mysteries, which were accounted foolishness by the heathen philosophers, and which, in the mind of the merely nominal Christian, are barren dogmas, held in the memory according to the form of words which expresses them, but without efficacy on the heart.

1 COR. ii. 6—10. *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect : yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought : but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory : which none of the princes of this world knew ; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.*

2. *Understanding.* (ΣΥΝΕΣΙΣ.) The power of apprehending, going along with, and intelligently assenting to, spiritual instruction, whether given through the Word of God, or in any other form.

ST. LUKE XXIV. 25. *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*

3. *Counsel* (ΒΟΥΛΗ) has reference to difficulties. As, where two principles of duty lead us in different directions, it is the part of the Spirit of Counsel to adjust them, and make the right path clear. Or, when circumstances arise, in which Christian discretion no less than zeal is demanded, it is the part of the Spirit of Counsel to discern the difficulties, and point out how they may be met.

4. *Ghostly strength*. (ΙΣΧΥΣ.) The Holy Spirit, in His antagonism to temptation and His resistance to sin, is a Spirit of ghostly strength.

5. *Knowledge*. (ΓΝΩΣΙΣ.) As Wisdom has reference to thought, and Understanding to apprehension, so Knowledge to memory. It is the having the mind filled with Divine Truth, as an armoury is filled with arms, or a repository with stores, which may be drawn forth as the emergency arises.

6. *Godliness*. (ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑ.) Godliness is a continual reference of the mind to God, to his Will and Word. It involves a constant sense of the Divine Presence; an asking, before we take in hand any

new enterprise, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? —a renunciation of the maxims of the world, and an adoption of the views laid down in Holy Scripture.

7. *The fear of the Lord.* (ΦΟΒΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ.) Holy Awe. Without this crowning grace, the other gifts of the Spirit might minister to pride. Man is so corrupt as to be proud, not only of his intellectual, but even of his spiritual attainments. The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord tempers and chastens the other graces, as the dark rays in the sunbeam temper and chasten the brilliancy of the other rays.

NOTE. It is remarkable that only six manifestations of the Spirit of Grace are mentioned in the original Hebrew of Isaiah xi. 2, and accordingly, only six are named in our Authorized Version, which is translated from the original. The LXX insert ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑ in the list, thereby making seven,—a number which harmonizes well with the emblem of the Holy Spirit in the book of the Revelation: *I saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*—REV. iv. 5.

VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS.

COME, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.

Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost thy seven-fold gifts impart.

Thy blessed Unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love :
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of thy grace ;
Keep far our foes, give peace at home ;
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of both, to be but One,—
That, through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song,

PRAISE TO THY ETERNAL MERIT,
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

IV.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE YOU RECEIVE THE LAYING ON OF HANDS, SAY SECRETLY IN YOUR HEART THE FOLLOWING WORDS, WHICH YOU ARE RECOMMENDED TO COMMIT TO MEMORY PREVIOUSLY :

The God that answereth by fire, let him be God. 1
KINGS xviii. 24.

LORD, I offer myself, body, soul, and spirit, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee. Accept me through thy Son Jesus Christ, (the True Altar, which alone can sanctify my gift,) and answer me, O Lord, by the fire of the Holy Ghost, sent down into my heart to consume my corruptions, to enlighten my dark mind, to warm my cold affections, and to kindle in me heavenly zeal and love, for Christ's sake. *Amen, and Amen.*

V.—Subsequent Conduct.

I.

ECCLES. v. 4, 5. *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools :*

pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.

DEUT. xxiii. 21—23. *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.*

I HAVE made a vow to the heart-searching God, and He will surely require the fulfilment of it.

I must not *defer* to pay it. I must be on my guard against that tendency of the heart, which leads us to postpone to a more favourable opportunity the carrying out of our good intentions. I must begin this day, this hour: for the present alone is ours. Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. I will make haste and prolong not the time to keep thy commandments, O Lord.

And again, I must not *slack* to pay it. I must be earnest, diligent, persevering, not considering how little I can do for God consistently with my vow, but rather how much I may do for Him, who has

done all for me. May my loins be girded about, and my light burning, and I myself like one who waits for his Lord.

Make me mindful, O Lord, that by my own voluntary act thy vows are upon me. If without my consent I was brought to Baptism, this step at least has been taken of my own free choice. One tie more now binds me to the service of Christ, and to the prosecution of my own true happiness.

II.

HEB. vi. 1, 2. *Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

THE Laying on of Hands is but a *principle* of the doctrine of Christ. This Rite of Confirmation therefore justly stands at the threshold of life, when its more serious responsibilities and its more seductive temptations are just about to open upon us. How foolish then is the notion that all the work of grace which has to be accomplished upon my heart has been accomplished now—that I am to acquiesce in

my present standard of holiness, and not rather look to receive out of Christ's fulness grace for grace. Let me be assured that the Holy Spirit is a well of water springing up into everlasting life—daily gushing forth therefore with fresh current in the heart of those who receive Him. And let the whole economy of animal and vegetable life teach me that in spiritual things also there is no life, where there is no growth! Grant, Lord, that from the light and strength imparted to me in Confirmation, I may go on to higher degrees of light and strength, growing always in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, until I come to Thine everlasting kingdom.

III.

1 TIM. vi. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

I WAS called to eternal life in my Baptism. I have now professed the pursuit of it in the Congregation, among whom Christ is present. And now the Ordinance is ended, and I am withdrawn from observation. The eyes of those who witnessed my Confirmation, are upon me no longer. Nevertheless, a great cloud

of witnesses compasses me about,—God, and Christ, and holy Angels, and, it may be, the spirits of just men made perfect, look down upon the battle-field in which I am engaged. Lord, put on me Thine armour,—the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation,—so that in Thy strength I may have victory and triumph against sin, the world, and the devil.

IV.

EPH. iv. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

I HAVE been sealed in Confirmation with the Holy Spirit of God. May I ever remember how high is the privilege and how awful the responsibility of having such a Gift dwelling in me! The Spirit of God is a Divine Person, Who can be grieved by my resistance to convictions, and angered by my perversity. Lord, may I hate and renounce the sins which make Thee mourn. As the flame of a lamp is a delicate thing, and may easily be extinguished by exposure to a rude breath of wind, so the light of the Spirit may be easily quenched by heedlessly plunging into worldly excitements. May I fan the flame daily by

Prayer, Meditation, and Holy Reading, and a diligent application to all the means of grace.

V.

1 COR. XI. 28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

IF I would come holy and clean to that heavenly Feast, in the marriage garment required by God in Holy Scripture, I must search and examine my own conscience. Help me, Lord, to do this faithfully and thoroughly. Lend me the light of Thy Spirit and of Thy word, to explore thereby the recesses of my character. Put me on my guard against the deceitfulness of my heart, and help me to discover and correct all my secret faults, for Christ's sake. Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting.

VI.

DEUT. XXVI. 17—19. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his*

judgments, and to hearken unto his voice : and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments ; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour ; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.

GOD has entered into a solemn covenant with me this day. The terms on His part are high and distinguished blessing, transcending all imagination and power of words—on my part they are these—“to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His voice.” What does He require of me, which does not conduce to my happiness as well as to His own glory? What, which He does not offer me grace to carry out? Lord, let Thine hand help me, for I have chosen Thy commandments. As for me, I will serve the Lord.

VII.

JUDGES xi. 35. *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.*

It is possible the Service of Christ may require of

me some sacrifice painful to flesh and blood. It *does* require the sacrifice of every cherished lust, though prized as a right eye or a right hand. But my vow is upon me, and I cannot go back. No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. It is my comfort to know that He makes no demand upon me, which He does not give me the strength to fulfil. Nor need I be disquieted about difficulties which may arise in future. The grace to meet them will come with them. We are too apt to cry in dismay, Who shall roll me away the stone? when we ought to march on bravely in the path of present duty, and so, when we come up with the stone, should find that it *was* rolled away. Lord, as of old Thou badest the Israelites go forward, when they stood on the brink of the Red Sea, so Thou biddest me go forward, under Thy auspices, upon the waves of this troublesome world. Hold Thou me up, O Jesus, and I shall walk upon the waters in safety.

A Short Prayer

WHICH MAY BE USED IN CONTEMPLATION OF THE
JOURNEY OF LIFE.

LET Thy mighty hand, O Lord, be ever with me for my protection, Thy mercy in Christ for my salvation, Thy unerring Word for my instruction, the grace of Thy quickening Spirit for my consolation, even unto the end, and in the end. *Amen.*

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING SOME

QUESTIONS WHICH MAY HELP CANDIDATES

FOR CONFIRMATION

IN THE EXAMINATION OF THEIR CONSCIENCES.

APPENDIX.

The Parents, or Masters, or Guardians, of those Candidates for Confirmation who cannot read, are requested to read over and explain this paper to them, stopping at the end of each question, and writing down the answer which the Candidate makes to it.

ACTS v. 1—11.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea,

for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.

How great was the sin, and how awful the doom, of Ananias and Sapphira, who solemnly professed before God's Apostles, that they were contributing to the common stock the whole of the money which they had obtained by the sale of their property, when they well knew that they were offering only a part of it! Your sin will much resemble theirs, if you come at Confirmation before the assembled Church, and God's chief Minister the Bishop, solemnly professing to give your whole heart to Christ, and yet keeping back a part of that heart for the world, or for some sinful pleasure. Man indeed cannot detect you, if you should do so—but from God's all-seeing eye no secrets can be hid; and be sure that He will punish you severely for such a sin in another world, although you may long go unpunished in this.

I would willingly save you from thus incurring God's displeasure—and for that reason I beg you to examine your own state of mind;—in doing which, I hope that the following directions will assist you.

Retire to your chamber, and there answer upon paper (if you can write) the following questions. If you cannot write, read the questions carefully over, and having considered

well what answers you will give to them, either get your parents or some friend to write down the answers for you ; or, if you prefer it, come to your Minister, and tell him your answers by word of mouth.

But before you enter upon this solemn examination of yourself, pray that God may enable you by His grace to give true and candid answers to these questions, which respect the state of your heart and conscience ;—using, if you please, this Prayer, or expressing the same sense in your own words :

“ Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, help me now, I beseech Thee, in looking into my own heart and conscience. Thy word assures me that my heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; I beseech Thee then to show me to myself. Enable me to answer these questions with sincerity and truth, remembering that I am in Thy sight, and that, although I may deceive man, I cannot deceive Thee. And deliver me from the awful sin of promising at Confirmation to be Thy servant, without seriously intending to fulfil that promise. I ask all in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“ Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.”

I. Read first these reasons, which make young people desirous of being Confirmed, and then answer the questions which follow.

(1) One very common reason is, that almost every body is Confirmed, when they arrive at years of discretion. It would be singular in them to depart from the ordinary custom, with which all their young friends and relations have complied; and people would ask why they did so.

(2) Another very common reason is, that their parents, or guardians, or masters, desire them to be Confirmed, and urge it strongly upon them.

(3) Another reason (given by some) is, that they think they are old enough to take upon themselves the responsibility of their own actions; which responsibility they fancy has hitherto rested upon the shoulders of their Godfathers and Godmothers. They wish to be grown-up men and women in every respect, and think they cannot be so, until they are Confirmed.

(4) Another (much less common) reason is, that they have resolved to turn to God with their whole hearts, and wish to seize this solemn opportunity of confessing before men that they have chosen His service.

(5) Another reason is, that they wish to be better and holier than they are; and imagine that the mere coming to Confirmation will make them so. A blessing (they think) cannot fail to attend the laying on of a Bishop's hands.

And, (6) Some people think they ought to be Confirmed, because there is a Service for Confirmation in the Prayer Book.

Which of these is *your* reason for desiring to be Confirmed? If you have two or more reasons, write out all of them; and if you have any reason which is not here expressed, say what it is.

II. What is the sin which most easily besets you¹?

III. On what grounds are you sorry for your sin? Is it because it has offended your Parents? or because it has brought upon you some disgrace or ridicule, or other inconvenience? or because it has brought your soul into danger, and offended your Heavenly Father?

IV. On what do your hopes of God's forgiveness rest? is it on your own resolutions of amendment, or on your prayers for pardon, or on your present good behaviour, or on the blood of Jesus Christ, or on all these (or some of these) put together?

V. Are you firmly resolved to struggle against all your sins for the future, and upon what are you relying to enable you to overcome them?

VI. Write out the prayer which you use every morning and evening. Do you ever express your wants to God in your own words, without using a form of prayer?

VII. Do you ever examine yourself by the rule of God's Commandments, and how do you do it? If you use a form of self-examination, write it out.

VIII. Do you read your Bible daily? Do you pray before reading it, and, if so, what do you pray for?

IX. Do you take pleasure in praying, reading the Bible, attending Church, &c., or do you find these religious exercises dull and irksome?

X. Are you resolved to attend the Lord's Table habi-

¹ An answer to this question is not insisted upon, if you feel a great objection to let another person know your besetting sin. But in that case, an assurance will be required of you, that you have really and honestly searched your conscience for an answer, and have confessed the sin (whatever it be) before God.

tually after Confirmation, and if not, what are your reasons for intending to neglect this most necessary duty ?

XI. Is there any point on which you desire the advice and assistance of a Clergyman ? If so, the Clergyman of your Parish will be glad to converse with you at any time.

Having written your answers, read them over carefully, to make sure of their being exactly true, and then sign your name to them at full length, and bring them to your Minister. He will of course never allow them to be seen by any one but himself.

A

PASTORAL LETTER,

**INSTRUCTING CATECHUMENS HOW TO PREPARE
THEMSELVES FOR**

FIRST COMMUNION.



A

PASTORAL LETTER,

INSTRUCTING CATECHUMENS HOW TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR
FIRST COMMUNION.

* * *You are requested to read this Paper through, and seriously to consider it, on the first quiet and convenient opportunity after it is put into your hands.*

HAVING the Pastoral Charge of your souls, I am very anxious to press upon you the following considerations in connexion with your approaching Confirmation :

The pitifulness of their case, who do not turn to God immediately. How much, which is absolutely in your favour, will you either actually throw away, or risk throwing away, if you do not forthwith return to God with all your heart. Consider the following points, and pause a little upon each of them, so as to let it sink into your mind.

(1) God has given you a mind capable of knowing Him, a heart capable of loving Him, a will capable of choosing Him, and a body all whose members are capable of being employed in His service. Thus you are endowed with great capabilities; nay, with the capability of becoming a glorified saint in heaven, and of being united to God for ever. *Pause.*

(2) You cannot of yourself develop these capabilities; therefore God offers you freely His grace in order to develop them, if you will work with that grace, and do your part faithfully. He will work in you, if you, under Him, will work out your own salvation.—Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Pause.*

(3) God has *especially* a mind of love, and an intention of grace towards *you*, as is shown

(a) By your having been born in a country where Christian Truth is known.

(b) By your having been baptized, and received the first fruits of Grace.

(c) By your having been educated in the knowledge of God's Word, and of all those truths which are necessary to secure your holiness here, and your happiness hereafter.

So He now says to you, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" *Pause.*

(4) Never at any future time of your life will you have so much in your favour, in undertaking this work of your salvation, as now you have; for (a) you are still young, and more or less tender.

Every day's delay of a lively repentance will draw a fine film of insensibility over your heart, which by accumulation will become a thick film. "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold; now is the day of salvation." *Pause.*

(b) You have received much religious instruction in connexion with your Confirmation, which it is probable will never be repeated. *Pause.*

(c) Confirmation is offered to you, and through it the gift of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the Spirit of holy fear. (*See the Manual, p. 57, of the Third Part*). *Pause.*

(d) Confirmation opens to you the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in which the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful. *Pause.*

Consider, then, summarily, what pearls you will *risk* throwing away, if you do not now turn to God, namely:

A rational soul. Grace intended for you. Grace offered to you. Grace received by you. Knowledge of the Gospel.

And what pearls you will *actually* throw away by such a course, namely :

Tenderness of heart. Religious instruction. The Gift of the Holy Ghost. The Body and Blood of Christ.

Resolve to waste no good gift of God. Make a resolution on your knees before God not to waste these precious gifts, saying, "O, my God, I bless Thee for all the spiritual advantages which Thy Sovereign Goodness has conferred upon me, an heir of sinful flesh and blood, and a worm of the dust, and I resolve, by Thy Grace, to unfold those capacities for Glory with which Thou hast endowed me."

The most precious of the Pearls. The most precious of all the above Pearls is the Body and Blood of Christ, which in a supernatural way the faithful receive into their hearts, as their Spiritual Food, in the Holy Communion.

The benefit of the Ordinance contingent on the recipient's state of mind. The entire benefit of this Ordinance being suspended on the state of mind of the recipient, you must see that you approach it in the right state of mind. And by way of enabling

you to do so, I have drawn up the following Paper, the directions of which will be few and simple, and the carrying of them out not burdensome. But see that you carry them out with the whole force of your mind, and by vigorous (though short) efforts of attention.

The Foundation of the Rule. No rule on this subject can be worth any thing which has not its foundation in the Word of God. Let us therefore lay down as our first stone, upon which all directions must be built, this precept of the Inspired Apostle : LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP.

The necessary condition of profitable Communion. Hence it would seem that he who comes to Holy Communion without previous Self-Examination, comes to it in defiance of a Divine Command.
Pause.

The method to be observed in this Examination. It would seem rational and appropriate to observe some systematic method in this Examination, as, for example, to examine the whole course of our past life previously to our First Communion ; previously to our second, to examine our character and conduct

since our first ; previously to our third, our character and conduct since our second, and so on. Thus our Communion will be stages in our spiritual course ; as it is written, "They go from strength to strength," (from one stage of the Spiritual Life to a further one,) "every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." You shall now, therefore, having attained an age of sufficient maturity to reflect, examine the whole course of your past life from the earliest period that you can remember. Do it thus :

I. *Have fore-* Fix upon a time when you can
thought in the be alone, quiet, and without inter-
choice of Time. ruption. That there may be the
less chance of interruption, and also that your mind
may be more fresh for the great work, resolve not to
spend more than a quarter of an hour in this retire-
ment at one time. When that period has expired,
break off the work with this short prayer, "*O my
God, I have undertaken this work of Self-Examination
in compliance with Thy Commandment. I offer it unto
Thee through Jesus Christ. Do Thou pardon what is
amiss in it, accept it, and bless it to my conviction of
sin, for His Merits and Mediation. Amen.*"

Yet contemplate the possibility of being inter-
rupted. If it should be so, notwithstanding your
precautions, meet the call (if it be an innocent one)

with cheerfulness and kindness, and resume your work at the first convenient opportunity.

II. *Place yourself* The time fixed upon having *in the Presence of God.* arrived, close your door, and place yourself in the Presence of God. Remember that His Eye is upon you, and spend a few moments in the endeavour to realize it. As this should be done before every prayer and meditation, I will mention three methods of doing it, any of which you may choose, but do not trouble yourself with more than one method at a time.

(1) Remember that, as no part of your body is without the soul or animating principle, so there is no place in the Universe, where God is not. In Him you draw your every breath,—live, move, and have your being. The very act of kneeling down is done through His energy. Think that we are like blind men at the court of a great King. The King is watching us narrowly, observing our dress, scrutinizing our manners and behaviour. But we have no assurance of His Presence by our senses; we are only assured of it by testimony. What a solemn thought, my heart, that I am in the Presence of the Heavenly King, and that His eye is searching me through and through, and that He is cognizant of all my secret history! *Pause.*

(2) Think of Jesus, the Incarnate God, now on the Right Hand of the Father. He is looking down upon thee, and watching thee in thy retirement. Be sure this is no picture of the Fancy, but a reality. He said to Nathanael of old, "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." And so to many a faithful follower at the last day, He will say, "When thou wast in thy closet, I saw thee, though thou fanciedst no eye was upon thee. I was observant of all thy ways there; every aspiration of thine came up, in a distinct whisper, into Mine Ear." *Pause.*

(3) Or you may think of God as intimately united with your own mind. The soul is diffused indeed throughout the body; but yet there are parts of the body (like the Head and Heart) where the soul more particularly resides. So, although God's Presence is indeed every where, yet the mind is His Sanctuary, where more especially He is present. He is in thy heart of hearts. No one but God can penetrate into that sanctuary of the secret desires. He is alone there, the lamp of the consciousness burning before Him. "The Lord is in His Holy Temple: keep silence, O my heart, before Him."

III. *Seek the In-* Say to this Great and Awful
spiration of God. Being, who is yet your tender
Father by adoption and grace, "O my God, Thou

hast commanded me to examine myself before receiving the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. And Thou wilt not withhold from me grace to comply with Thy command. Give me Thy Holy Spirit to convince me of sin. My heart is deceitful above all things; show me to myself. For Thou wast about my path, and about my bed, and spiedst out all my ways from my infancy. Remember, Good Lord, that in this work I can do nothing without Thy Light. Deny me not Thy Divine Inspirations for Christ's sake."

Even one of these sentences will be enough, if said with the whole of your mind. God asks not long, but fervent, prayers.

And having prayed for it, firmly believe that the supernatural aid of Grace is granted to you. For God is much too merciful a Father to withhold that aid from those who seek it earnestly, seeing that it is much more essential to the life of our souls, than bread to the life of our bodies.

IV. *Distribute* Break up your past life into the *life into periods.* periods into which it most naturally falls, as for example, the period before you were old enough to be placed under a Tutor, the

period of being under a Tutor, the period of your first School, the period of your Public School life. Or thus: the first residence of your Parents which you can remember, the residence to which they next moved, &c., &c., and so the different roofs under which you have been. Or thus: the different families in which you have lived.

V. *God's Mercy* You are to consider generally *and man's sin mutually enhance one another.* two things under each period, namely, (1) God's mercies to you during that period. (2) Your sins. In proportion as either of these are great, will the other be great also. The thunder-cloud never seems so lowering as when the rainbow spans it, nor the rainbow ever so bright, as when it is backed by the thunder-cloud.

VI. *The outward and inward mercies of childhood.* Consider then, first, the mercies of childhood. These were not only outward, such as, (1) nurture. (2) Protection from many dangers and accidents. (3) Recoveries from serious illness. (4) Watchfulness and affectionateness of parents. (5) Innocent and keen amusements; but also inward, consisting of good desires, occasional religious impressions, inspirations of Grace, whisperings of God's Voice in

the conscience, all sent to you in virtue of your Baptism.

VII. *The Ex-* Ask yourself then the follow-
amination of Child- ing questions on the above
hood. points, remembering that God's
 Eye is scrutinizing you while you do it, and saying
 secretly from time to time in your heart, "Try me,
 O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me,
 and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be
 any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the
 way everlasting." Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

(1) Were you at all thoughtful in your childhood of the power which nurtured and preserved you, and, when the thought of God crossed your mind, did you entertain and suffer it to remain there?

(2) Were you affectionate and obedient to your parents? What acts of insubordination and self-will can you remember?

(3) Did you follow on whither your good impressions led you, or did you thrust them out of your heart, or, at least, did you willingly allow your heart to be hardened against them? Can you ever remember stirring up the Grace of God, that is, rousing yourself to serve Him in good earnest, when you heard His whispers in your conscience?

Here make a memorandum of the results of the

examination, and close it for the present with the prayer above given you, in Section I.

VIII. *The Blessing of Education.* Proceed now to the period of your boyhood and School Life. Here too the subjects of reflection are to be God's mercies and your sins. You are to consider how great a blessing education is; how by improving the mind, it makes you capable of enjoyments higher and purer than the unlearned, and, indeed, raises you in the scale of creation into a higher being. For God is the Father of Lights, and therefore every accession of light which the mind receives is from Him, as much as every impulse of Divine love, by which the heart is quickened. How great a mercy is it that your Parents had resources to give you this liberal Education; that you were not forced in your early youth to the drudgery of agricultural or manufacturing labour, which might have stupified the mind, or perhaps have rendered it quick only to evil. And if your parents are doing this at any sacrifice to themselves, how greatly are your natural obligations to them increased.

IX. *Examination on Mercies of Youth.* You shall ask yourself there-fore;

How are you improving this talent of education?

Are you conscious of having wasted your time? of having had no deliberate view of improvement, but only studying when the humour served you, or for the sake of distinction? of doing as little as you could, consistently with avoiding censure and punishment? Have whole tracts of time passed over without a thought of your parents' sacrifices, or of how you might show yourself grateful for them? Have you been careless of your expenditure, and reckless of what you cost your parents?

X. *Examination* But since, from the sinful atmosphere with which we are surrounded, education is impossible without our imbibing at the same a knowledge of evil, it behoves you much (and here I entreat you to be particular and searching in your examination) to ask,

How you welcomed that knowledge of evil, which you received at School?

Did you greedily hear of sin, and allow your thoughts to dwell upon it?

Did you wish to practise it?

Did you practise it, as far as you were able?

Did you deprave your mind, which in virtue of your Baptism is God's Sanctuary, by unclean thoughts, bad books, or improper conversation?

Have you given way to petty vanities,—vanity of dress, or good looks, or superior cleverness?

Have you been disrespectful to your teachers, or to those older than yourself?

What instances of selfishness in your past life can you remember, or of inconsiderateness for the wishes and happiness of others?

What instances can you remember, in which you may have done mischief to others by putting bad thoughts into their minds, or discouraging them in what was good?

XI. *Conclude with Confession, Prayer for Pardon, and Oblation of yourself to God.* The above are the principal heads of examination, and you must fill them up as the circumstances of your past life may suggest. Having brought the examination up to the present time, and made short notes of all that you have discovered amiss in yourself, place yourself once more in the Presence of God, and say,

HEAVENLY FATHER, help me to pour out my heart before Thee in confession. I confess, Lord, to having received such and such mercies in childhood (*specifying them*), and such and such mercies in youth (*specifying them*); but, alas! how have I

trodden under foot Thy many mercies, and done despite to the Spirit of Grace! I confess, Lord, to such and such sins in my childhood (*specifying them and their aggravations*), and to such and such sins in my youth (*specifying them and their aggravations, but always in short and simple terms, remembering that God requires not high-flown language, and that He can read the case which we lay before Him, even when we cannot or dare not fully express it*).

O Father! I make my appeal to that Love which moved Thee to send Thy Son to die for me; with my whole heart I beseech Thee to forgive me these sins.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Great High Priest, wash me in the blood of Thine Atonement, and recommend me to the mercy of God.

O God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, work in me by Thy Grace a true and hearty repentance for my many and grievous sins.

Lord, I renounce these sins with all my heart, and with the help of Thy Grace will never more go after them; and here I offer and present unto Thee my spirit, soul, and body to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee, humbly beseeching Thee that I and all who shall be with

me partakers of the Holy Communion may be filled with Thy Grace and Heavenly Benediction, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

XII. If you honestly adopt the above method of Self-Examination, you will be entitled to the satisfaction of knowing that you have done all in your power to prepare your mind for the Ordinance, and therefore may confidently expect the blessing on it. Till the day of Communion comes, add to your daily prayers Psalm 84, and the prayer in the Communion Service, "We do not presume to come to this Thy table," &c., and keep as quiet and free from distractions as may be.

THE END.







